



**Insurance Committee Public Hearing  
February 10, 2011**

**Terry Edelstein, President/CEO  
Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA)**

**S.B. 877 AAC Mental Health Parity**

I am please to provide testimony today in support of S.B. 877 AAC Mental Health Parity.

The Connecticut Community Providers Association (CCPA) represents organizations that provide services and supports for people with disabilities and significant challenges including children and adults with substance use disorders, mental illness, developmental, and physical disabilities. Community providers deliver quality health and human services to 500,000 of Connecticut's residents each year. We are the safety net.

We were pleased to have participated in the negotiations for what became Connecticut's parity legislation a dozen years ago. This legislation was groundbreaking for its inclusion of both mental health and substance use disorders. At the same time, it was limited in that it applied to a segment of state residents rather than extending to all coverage groups.

This year we are seeking your support in aligning the provisions of the Connecticut legislation as much as possible with those of the broader federal provisions of the Wellstone/Domenici Mental Health Parity and Equity Act of 2008. We understand that a number of technical edits will be necessary to assure that the beneficial components of Connecticut's legislation don't get diluted but instead become strengthened by the federal provisions. For example, we understand that discussions are underway to exempt employers with fewer than fifty employees from the parity requirements since they are exempt in the federal legislation. While we would like to see all businesses fall under the parity provisions, we understand that some accommodation might be

**CCPA**

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necessary and encourage your Committee to consider ways to assure incremental reform of the parity legislation after this year's amended legislation is approved.

Access to mental health and substance abuse treatment are essential components of healthcare whether for children, adolescents or adults. Connecticut should be proud of its strong parity legislation and should continue to pave the way toward ensuring that all, not just some, Connecticut residents have the opportunity of receiving treatment that is equivalent for mental disorders as for general health.

We look forward to working with your Committee to implement this broader, more inclusive parity legislation.